A Children's Book

The Forest of Eight Paths

A Story of Friendship and Finding Peace

By ■■■ (Changyou Sia)

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Meet the Eight Friends

En the deer
Chinese ■ — grace/kindness
"worried too much"

Claire the fox
"often had negative thoughts"

Rani the rabbit
Sanskrit — queen
"rushed everywhere"

Mei the squirrel
Chinese ■ — beautiful
"often selfish"

Emma the owl
"stayed up thinking"

Hiro the mouse
Japanese ■ — generous
"very shy"

Tong the hedgehog
Chinese ■ — together
"got grumpy easily"

Nile the otter
"couldn't sit still"

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En the Deer

Path 1 - Right Understanding

The first path was lined with crystal-clear pools.

"This is the Path of Clear Seeing," read En.

In the water, En saw herself clearly. "I worry about things that haven't happened yet! Most of my fears aren't real!"

"I thought my worries were real dangers, but they're just thoughts floating by like clouds. And clouds always pass."

Understanding ourselves is the first step to changing.

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Path 2 - Right Thought

The second path had magical trees growing "thought-fruits."

Negative thoughts grew bitter, black fruits. Kind thoughts grew sweet, golden ones.

"Look!" gasped Claire. "When I think negative things about myself, the fruit turns bad. But when I think kind thoughts instead, the fruit turns sweet!"

Our thoughts shape our world.

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Rani & Hiro

Path 3 - Right Speech

On the third path, words became visible!

"When I'm not good at anything," Tong grumbled — sharp thorns appeared around him.

"Ouch! My grumpy words hurt — even when I say them about myself!"

Hiro said gently, "Yes, words do hurt. But you can choose kind words instead." A beautiful rose bloomed.

"Words have power. We should use them with kindness to help each other."

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Mei the Squirrel

Path 4 - Right Action

On the fourth path, they saw friends who needed help.

They built a bridge over a muddy stream so others could cross. When they saw fallen branches blocking the path, they moved them aside. When they found a turtle flipped on its back, they gently turned it over.

Each kind action makes our heart glow warmer.

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Emma the Owl

Path 5 - Right Livelihood

The fifth path had eight workshops, each teaching different skills.

"Right Livelihood means finding how you can help the world," explained an elder badger.

En learned healing herbs. Claire discovered she loved teaching little ones. Rani found joy in building things that last. Everyone found their special way to be helpful.

"We can make the world better!" they cheered.

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Hiro the Mouse

Path 6 - Right Effort

The sixth path was a gentle mountain.

Nile the otter raced ahead and got exhausted. Tong gave up too quickly.

"Right Effort," said a wise crane, "means trying steadily. Not too hard, not too soft. Just right!"

They learned to pace themselves, rest when needed, and keep going with gentle determination.

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Path 7 - Right Mindfulness

The seventh path opened into a meadow.

"Notice softly," whispered the wind. "Notice what is true right now."

Rani stopped rushing. She noticed: grass under her paws, her breathing, her tired legs, a bird singing, and the feeling of wanting to hurry again.

Tong noticed he felt grumpy — and that was okay to notice too.

Mindfulness meant seeing things as they are.

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Nile the Otter

Path 8 - Right Concentration

The eighth path led to a peaceful clearing.

"Sit. Breathe. Focus," instructed a serene turtle.

"Focus on what?" asked Nile.

"Your breath," said the turtle. "Breathe in, notice. Breathe out, notice. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back."

It was hard at first! But slowly, they learned: focus wasn't about never losing attention — it was about coming back, again and again.

In that practice, they found their inner quiet.

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The Eight Paths Unite

Suddenly, the eight paths merged into one shining road.

"You've walked the Eightfold Path!" announced the Forest Guardian, a majestic golden deer. "You've learned the Buddha's way to peace."

"But we're not perfect yet," said En.

"No one is," smiled the Guardian. "But now you know the way. You can walk it again and again, your whole life."

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The Friends Have Changed

Back home, everything looked the same — but the friends had changed:

En	understood her worries better	Claire	thought kind thoughts
Rani	savoured each moment	Mei	shared generously
Emma	rested her mind	Hiro	spoke up with confidence
Tong	caught his grumpy thoughts	Nile	learned to be still

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The Friends Become Teachers

The friends became teachers, sharing the Eight Paths with other young animals.

"The path to peace isn't a place you go to," explained En. "It's a way you walk, every single day."

"And it's easier when we walk it together!" added Rani.

The forest filled with peace, one paw-step at a time.

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A Secret Worth Knowing

As the sun set, the eight friends sat together beneath their favourite oak tree.

They had started the journey feeling lost, worried, and struggling. Now they felt peaceful — not because everything was perfect, but because they had found the path.

"Want to know a secret?" whispered Emma. "We're still learning. And that's okay."

Everyone nodded, feeling grateful.

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The Buddha's Eightfold Path

Quick Reference Guide

Path 1: Right Understanding
En — See things clearly, not through fear

Path 2: Right Thought
Claire — Think kind, peaceful thoughts

Path 3: Right Speech
Rani — Speak truthfully, kindly, helpfully

Path 4: Right Action
Mei — Do good things that help, not harm

Path 5: Right Livelihood
Emma — Use your gifts to help the world

Path 6: Right Effort
Hiro — Try steadily, with balance

Path 7: Right Mindfulness
Tong — Pay attention to each moment

Path 8: Right Concentration
Nile — Focus your mind peacefully

A Note to Grown-Ups

The Eightfold Path is the Buddha's Fourth Noble Truth — the way to end suffering and find peace. Each character represents a common childhood struggle. The path is walked one step at a time, with patience and love.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free from suffering.

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